

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;
providing a rotatable table;
adhering a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;

5 supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles;

polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth with said polishing agent in contact with said surface of said wafer;

10 controlling pH of said polishing agent in a pH value range level from 10 to 13, wherein Na_2CO_3 is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution.

2. (Previously Presented) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate; and

5 polishing a surface of the wafer being in contact with a polishing cloth adhered on a rotatable table in such a state that a polishing agent is supplied onto the polishing cloth, wherein the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains silica, said silica being essentially uniformly dispersed in said alkaline solution, the silica having particles each essentially in the shape of a sphere and an average particle diameter of 5 to 10 nm.

3. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 2, wherein the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains a concentration of silica in a range of 2 to 20 wt % and further an organic base or a salt thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the organic base or the salt thereof is a quaternary ammonium hydroxide.

5 - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 4, wherein the quaternary ammonium hydroxide is tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide.

10. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a ~~predetermined~~ dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

11. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the wafer is a silicon wafer.

12 - 13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 2 to 20 wt %.

15. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

16. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein Asker C hardness (~~Asker C hardness~~) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

17. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein stock removal of the wafer is 1 μm or more.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;
providing a rotatable table;
connecting a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;

5 supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles, said organic base being a quaternary ammonium hydroxide;

providing a means for holding said polishing agent;
polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth

10 in contact with said surface of said wafer;
collecting excess polishing agent after polishing said wafer with said polishing agent;
supplying said excess polishing agent to said means for holding said polishing agent, said
excess polishing agent mixing with existing polishing agent contained in said holding means to
form a polishing agent mixture;
15 adjusting pH level of said polishing agent mixture in a pH value range from 10 to 13,
wherein Na₂CO₃ is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution; and
supplying said polishing agent mixture to said polishing cloth.

19. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18,
wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

20. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18,
wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

21. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim [[18]]
20, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

22. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18,
wherein hardness (Asker C hardness) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

23. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a predetermined dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

24. (Canceled)